

# A conspiracy of the rich

## Editorial

WHAT IS government?

*'Government is nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor'.*

Sir Thomas More said that, nearly 500 years ago. More had occasion to know about such things, having been the king's chief minister, Lord Chancellor of England. He knew that the root function of government is to look after the rich and keep the poor from laying rough hands on them or their property.

The idea that government is a conspiracy takes on a special meaning in Italy now, where the trial of Giulio Andreotti for mafia activities opens at the end of September.

Who is Andreotti? He has been at the centre of Italy's political life for the last 50 years. He is the single most important post-war Italian politician.

Serving in 24 of Italy's post-war governments, Andreotti was Prime Minister of Italy no less than 7 times, and was 6 times Foreign Minister. Now he is accused of working, during his years in government, to protect the mafia and serve its purposes!

Evidence which has been made public adds up to a plausible case that this much-sworn-in ex-Prime Minister of Italy, a devout Catholic, is himself a member of the great criminal conspiracy whose tentacles are spread through Italy and across the world. In other words, the mafia at various times has controlled the government of Italy!

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Key sections of Italian politics, finance and industry have converged and become inextricably entwined with the mafia in a common conspiracy against the Italian people.

This melodramatic, and scarcely believable, conspiracy underlines once again what government is everywhere in class society, the underlying reality that Lord Chancellor More uncovered 500 years ago: whether they operate outside their own law or within the law or, as in Italy, on both sides of the law, everywhere *government*



Italian political posters depict the mafia-Andreotti connection.

*is a conspiracy of the rich against the rest of society, in the first place now against the working class and the poor.*

It is when there is nothing illegal that you get the purest forms of the eternal conspiracy of the rich against all the others. They do not normally have to resort to illegality. They *make* the laws, after all. Italy is an exception, an aberration. Take Britain.

For 15 years in Britain everything the government dared do has been done to serve the rich and the well off. There has been a government-orchestrated debauch of guzzling and spoiling by the well off at the expense of the rest of society.

Public assets, utilities like water, electricity, rail etc, have been systematically plundered to further enrich the rich at the expense of society.

Their "greed-rules, okay?" self-righteousness has reached astonishing levels and become the dominant philosophy in our society. Though it means running down the NHS and depriving some of those who can not pay for medical care of a healthy life and sometimes of life itself, the well-off must have tax cuts!

The conspirators made plans years in advance to beat down resistance to the bourgeois plunderers. All the pieces were co-ordinated and orchestrated, public opinion shaped and manipulated to their purposes.

For years they schemed and organised the resources of the state to destroy the miners' union because it was considered a dangerous centre of opposition to the interests of the bourgeois class.

The law officers, the courts and the police have been used like mafia thugs to cripple, shackle and beat down the only instrument workers have for self-defence,

the trade unions.

Government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich! Government by the property owners to keep the poor, the propertyless and the owners of petty property in "their place".

In Sir Thomas More's time they did that by mutilating and hanging homeless vagabonds who had been driven off the land and out of productive labour. They cut down rebellious peasants at the same time as the venal nobility stole vast tracts of public land.

In our time which has seen the greatest plunder by the rich of public assets since the common land was stolen from the people between the 16th and 19th centuries, they have worked it by shackling and disabling the unions, by driving people out of effective health care and millions out of productive labour, by harrying the homeless and unemployed, by whipping up middle-class lynch mob moods against the victims of oppression.

It has all been done legally, give or take a bit of ostentatious corruption, such as that of the Thatcher family.

In Britain and throughout the capitalist world, the open conspiracy of the rich against the people goes on and is everywhere successful. It is accepted even by most of its victims as "normal". It is "normal".

Unlike Andreotti, they will never under this system be brought to book for it. It will go on being "normal" until the labour movement and its allies decide it should go on no longer. Until the working class and the other victims of the conspiracies of the rich, organise a powerful, educated and determined movement for socialist democracy to put an end to it. ■